

Hello MLS Staff,

At Mast Landing School, one of our continuing goals is to create an environment that fosters acceptance, support and inclusivity. One aspect of this work is our effort to use gender-neutral language with all students and staff. Using non-gender conforming terms makes a big difference within our school walls. It helps everyone feel welcome, no matter their identity, and it sets an example for students, staff and families that gender-neutral language is the norm and that no one should assume anything about someone without asking first.

There are many ways you can change the way you speak and the words you use to be more inclusive. For example, outside of school, instead of using the term "wife" or "husband," you can substitute it for a "partner" or "spouse." This takes the gender completely out of the situation. Instead of "waiter" or "waitress", use "server." At school, we should use "Hey, everyone" instead of "Hey, guys". Instead of "boys and girls," use "students", "third graders", "learners", etc.

At MLS, there are students that are questioning gender identity, expression and sexual orientation. As we support these students, simple changes in language can make a world of difference. So remember, even if you think you know how everyone in the room identifies, using gender-neutral language is crucial to ensure that our students feel safe and supported.

One of the first MLS Civil Rights Team projects this year will be creating gender-neutral language posters to distribute to classrooms and hang around the school as a helpful tool. In the meantime, if you have any thoughts or questions, please don't hesitate to speak up.

Thank you for your continued awareness of the well-being of our MLS students and staff.

Emily Grimm, Susan Albertini & Beth Rankin